

Preserving academic freedom in the age of artificial intelligence

Authors¹:

Michel MARIC, Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of Reims - Champagne-Ardenne

Marc CHAMPESME, Senior Lecturer in Computer Science at Sorbonne Paris-Nord University

Christophe VOILLIOT, Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Paris-Nanterre

In many countries, the narrowing of democratic space is becoming apparent. The authoritarianism of political powers, direct violence against academics, and economic pressures are leading to increased censorship and the growth of self-censorship within institutions. There is an ever-increasing number of attacks on academic freedoms at the international level. In this context, artistic freedom, press freedom and the independence of the judiciary are regularly called into question. A drive for ideological control is becoming evident, with the governance of higher education increasingly focused on surveillance. Does the development of AI systems, which allow for greater control over both teaching and research, not thus come at the worst possible time?

In France, the list of recent attacks, including legislative ones, is already impressive. Under the guise of defending academic freedom, even the French association of university presidents (France Universités) is patiently orchestrating, up to the European level, the weakening of academic freedom by seeking to confine the defense of this freedom solely for individual institutions.

The desire to legislate, to enshrine it in charters, to curtail it, to expand it, to delimit it, to (re)define it... the issue of academic freedom has now, more than ever, become a political issue. Yet there can be no university, no production or transmission of knowledge, without academic freedom.

While AI holds the promise of revolutionary changes in research and education, its development and dissemination already affect a vast number of fields. The widespread use of AI by students alone is already challenging and transforming the working environment of academics. But the impact of AI on the production and transmission of knowledge is staggering when one considers its consequences for academic freedom.

The recommendation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) by the 1997 General Conference concerning the status of higher education teaching personnel provides a definition of academic freedom by setting out a list of freedoms to be recognized for academics. This is important because, whilst it has no legal force, it nevertheless serves as a benchmark, a framework and a key advocacy tool. The process to revise this resolution is underway, to be completed by 2028, to take into account in particular, technological changes,

¹ This article is a translation of the article « *Préserver la liberté académique à l'heure de l'intelligence artificielle* », <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/michel-maric/blog/020626/preserver-la-liberte-academique-lheure-de-lintelligence-artificielle>. The translation has been made with the help of the AI translation platform DeepL and Sibyl Jade Pena.

including the development and dissemination of artificial intelligence systems. However, this revision is not without raising concerns in the context of the current decline in academic freedom.

In the preamble to its 1997 declaration², UNESCO is “*expressing concern regarding the vulnerability of the academic community to untoward political pressures which could undermine academic freedom*”, whilst noting that “*the right to education, teaching and research can only be fully enjoyed in an atmosphere of academic freedom*”. It emphasises that “*the open communication of findings, hypotheses and opinions lies at the very heart of higher education and provides the strongest guarantee of the accuracy and objectivity of scholarship and research*”. Consequently (VI, A, 27), a fairly broad definition of academic freedom is provided: “*the principle of academic freedom should be scrupulously observed. Higher-education teaching personnel are entitled to the maintaining of academic freedom, that is to say, the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies*”.

We must therefore consider how the development of AI is likely to influence the conditions under which knowledge is produced and transmitted, and the threat that AI could pose to the academic freedom that underpins the very existence of universities.

The first concerns regarding AI have recently emerged in public debate: in computer science, in artistic creation, in the press...

It is necessary to emphasise, as linguist Emily Bender³ does, that the “*AI hype covers for a small set of power-hungry actors at work and in the world*” and to highlight an approach that leads to “*justifying data theft, motivating surveillance capitalism, and devaluing human creativity*” with the aim, or at the very least the risk “*to replace meaningful work with jobs that treat people like machines*”.

It is also necessary to emphasise, as the tobacco and oil industries have done previously, that Big Tech companies seek to influence research through funding or the publication of articles. The proportion of articles in the field of Natural Language Processing with at least one industry affiliation rose from less than 2% before 2000 to 14% in 2020⁴. The industry therefore plays an increasing role in funding research and, consequently, in defining research topics. It also concentrates the material resources required to carry out certain research (i.e. computing power, large data centres, etc.). As the AI industry is heavily involved in limiting or removing any regulation, it has every interest in promoting research that downplays the risks of AI. Added to this is the fact that the industry does not allow open access to researchers for the analysis of its systems and training data.

2 <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-concerning-status-higher-education-teaching-personnel>

3 Emily Bender et Alex Hanna, *The AI Con: How to Fight Big Tech's Hype and Create the Future We Want*, Harper, mai 2025.

4 Mohamed Abdalla, Jan Philip Wahle, Terry Ruas, Aurélie Névéol, Fanny Ducel, et al. “*The Elephant in the Room: Analysing the Presence of Big Tech in Natural Language Processing Research*”, 61st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics, July 2023, Toronto, Canada. pp. 13141–13160.

Challenges regarding the quality and volume of research output

Nevertheless, not a day goes by now without the ‘AI revolution’ being documented in the context of research. In terms of data analysis, calculations and even the generation of hypotheses, AI promises to revolutionise day-to-day research work: in physics, chemistry, biology, medicine and mathematics...

Two issues have already been documented. The first relates to the number of conference paper proposals, journal article submissions and project funding applications, which have multiplied with the advent of AI. The number of publications indexed in Scopus or Web of Science increased by 47% between 2016 and 2022. It is therefore tempting to use AI to process this flood of incoming publications. This immediately raises the question of how AI should evaluate this mass of material, which in itself raises numerous concerns and constitutes a subject in its own right, given its impact on peer dialogue: it poses a threat severe enough to undermine the very concept of academic freedom.

Added to this is the use of AI for the allocation of funding, particularly PhD scholarships, where it could be used to select reviewers for submitted publications, or even to choose research topics deemed promising. The wealthiest universities, equipped with the best AI systems, could then promise better working conditions, faster career progression and, consequently, higher pay...

But whilst these first two issues are far from resolved, a third is already emerging: it relates to profound changes at the very heart of the profession: methods of production, stages of reflection, planning, data analysis, hypothesis generation...

In biochemistry, Alessandra Carbone, Professor of Sorbonne University in the Laboratory of Computational, Quantitative and Synthetic Biology, states: “AI has changed my life⁵” before listing all the benefits of AI in terms of speed and the volume of data processed. Beyond the time saved, she actually describes an impressive acceleration in research or the production of research results.

In its 19 May 2026 issue, the journal Nature publishes two articles demonstrating AI’s ability to discover new drugs. These are presented by the companies Google DeepMind and FutureHouse, which are building two multi-agent architectures named Co-Scientist⁶ and Robin⁷ respectively, to “accelerate scientific discovery”. Several dozen authors have signed the paper presenting the Co-Scientist system, based on Gemini, Google’s AI. The ambition is clearly stated and has already yielded a result: “Scientific discovery is driven by the iterative process of observation, hypothesis generation, experimentation, and data analysis. Despite recent advancements in applying artificial intelligence to biology, no system has yet automated all these stages. Here, we introduce Robin, the first multi-agent system capable of fully automating both hypothesis generation and data analysis for experimental biology. By integrating literature search agents with data analysis agents, Robin can generate hypotheses, propose experiments, interpret experimental results, and generate updated hypotheses, achieving a semi-autonomous approach to scientific discovery. By applying this system, we were able to identify promising therapeutic candidates for dry age-related macular degeneration”.

⁵ Le Monde, supplément Science et médecine, 27 mai 2026.

⁶ Juraj Gottweis, Wei-Hung Weng et al., “Accelerating scientific discovery with Co-Scientist”, Nature, 19 May 2026. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-026-10644-y>

⁷ Ali Essam Ghareeb, Benjamin Chang, “A multi-agent system for automating scientific discovery”, Nature, 19 May 2026. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-026-10652-y>

Science journalist David Larousserie sums it up as follows: these two systems constitute “*two tools whose brains are the classic text-generating chatbots that act as sort of hypothesis generators: they scour publications to identify whether molecules active against certain pathologies might also be active against others (this is known as repositioning)*”⁸.

In mathematics, with the latest advances in AI, difficult problems can be easily solved. Last April, in number theory, a virtual amateur solved Erdős’s Problem 1196. In May, in combinatorial geometry, OpenAI announced that it had disproved an Erdős conjecture dating from 1946... AI could help solve problems we have been working on for several years. Timothy Gowers, winner of the 1998 Fields Medal, even stated on his X-Tweeter account on 8 May 2026 that ChatGPT “*proved a result that in my assessment would have made a perfectly reasonable chapter in a PhD thesis. It did this in a total of a couple of hours, with a few prompts from me that contained no mathematical input whatsoever*”⁹.

In the humanities and social sciences (HSS), some are already saying, like Dejan Glavas: “*We, as social science researchers, are losing control of our profession. And we’re pretending not to see it*”¹⁰. Asserting that we have already entered “*a loop where AI evaluates AI*”, he emphasises that AI is not merely disrupting our working methods; it is profoundly challenging what it means to “*conduct research*”. Precisely because it is difficult to validate results produced by an algorithm whose inner workings remain opaque. Because it is impossible to guarantee scientific rigour when the tool can ‘*hallucinate*’ and invent... even bibliographical references. Given the difficulty of maintaining critical thinking in this context, the real risk, the author stresses, does not stem from AI: “*but from our inertia*”, from our desire to take advantage of what it offers and to accept convenience without resistance.

AI is already skewing research, as Zhicheng Lin demonstrates, arguing that “*it is imperative to establish guidelines for their use now*”, given that “*they distort the literature that scientists choose to cite*”¹¹. Furthermore, when they act as intermediaries in access to scientific publications (search engines, article abstracts, state-of-the-art reviews, ...), AI systems reproduce and amplify biases – for example, by prioritising the most cited articles or white authors (based on names) – thereby tending to render a whole section of research invisible.

The explosion in the number of publications is leading to a crisis in evaluation

The growing use of AI tools in research raises a number of issues regarding evaluation: “*On the one hand, scientists who rely on AI for their research publish more frequently, are cited more often than their peers, and progress more rapidly in their careers. On the flip side, research conducted using AI explores fewer new areas than other research and tends to confine itself to already well-established fields of study*”¹².

8 Le Monde, supplément Science et Médecine, 20 May 2026.

9 Timothy Gowers, <https://x.com/wtgowers/status/2052830952758382850>

10 Dejan Glavas, “*Quand tout s’effondre ? L’intelligence artificielle comme force de rupture de la recherche en sciences de gestion*”, Revue française de gestion, 2025/6, pp. 189–212.

11 Zhicheng Lin, “*AI chatbots are already biasing research — we must establish guidelines for their use now*”, Nature, 9 Sept. 2025, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-02810-5>

12 CNRS, “*Comment l’IA générative transforme les métiers de la recherche ?*”, <https://www.cnrs.fr/fr/actualite/comment-lia-generative-transforme-les-metiers-de-la-recherche>

In the study they published in Nature, Qianyue Hao, Fengli Xu, Yong Li and James Evans note that *“Scientists who engage in AI-augmented research publish 3.02 times more papers, receive 4.84 times more citations, and become research project leaders 1.37 years earlier than those who do not. By contrast, AI adoption shrinks the collective volume of scientific topics studied by 4.63% and decreases scientist's engagement with one another by 22.00%. Thereby, AI adoption in science presents a seeming paradox -- an expansion of individual scientists' impact but a contraction in collective science's reach -- as AI-augmented work moves collectively toward areas richest in data¹³”*. In the medium to long term, this may be accompanied by a decline in the quality of AI systems, as these are trained in past publications.

It is therefore legitimate to question the quality of the articles produced and to distinguish between quantity and quality. Whilst the research evaluation model currently prevalent worldwide already favours the bibliometric approach and the number of publications, the availability of AI acts here as a massive amplifier of an already existing trend towards an increase in the number of publications.

Use AI or perish?... Or perish by using AI?

The invention of the washing machine saved time and eliminated a task that was previously long, laborious and tedious. But did it free women from patriarchal oppression? In the same way, the question now arises as to the time freed up by AI. Does it eliminate our previously long, laborious and tedious tasks? Undoubtedly, if we are to believe certain accounts. AI holds a promise: that of facilitating research work and, more fundamentally, that of accelerating research and the advancement of knowledge. But AI raises significant challenges for scientific output, linked to the very role it is coming to play within it: who proposes the initial topic? What is the actual role played by AI in research work? What would become of the production of knowledge in a world where everything is automated?

By glossing over these issues, tech multinationals are making an individual and short-term promise. Yet, on a collective level and in the medium-to-long term, AI carries the risk of undermining scientific output.

The threat that AI already poses to the development of critical thinking raises questions. As its use becomes more widespread, it is particularly worth highlighting the risk, in the immediate future, that young researchers will lose the ability to formulate a research topic themselves.

AI carries the risk of homogenising knowledge. How, in this context, can we preserve the diversity of scientific approaches? And the promotion of non-dominant knowledge? What safeguards must be put in place against the cultural, sexist or linguistic biases inherent in these models?

Once AI engineering becomes, in a sense, a constraining framework for cognitive activity, it is less the scholar's freedom that is at stake than their ability to make adjustments and verify the efficiency of the tools that will be at the centre of monitoring activities. Mastery of AI will gradually become the main criterion for selecting evaluators, which will consequently alter the conditions for the accumulation of scientific capital.

13 Qianyue Hao, Fengli Xu, Yong Li and James Evans, *“Artificial intelligence tools expand scientists' impact but contract science's focus”*, Nature, 14 January 2026. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-025-09922-y#auth-Qianyue-Hao-Aff1>.

In a world where the very control of scientific activity was determined by AI, scientific revolutions (in Thomas Kuhn's sense) would no longer be possible, as questions regarding dominant paradigms would be absorbed by the intricacies of instrumental developments. This epistemological shift would likely provoke both resistance and accommodation. This resistance, in the name of subjectivity, or more precisely of an ontological conception of freedom, would likely take the form of the '*prophetic pulpit*' to which Max Weber opposed axiological neutrality, a distinction not always fully grasped by his 21st-century readers. If the scientific field is transformed into a subordinate field of the economy, how could we still justify to civil society and policymakers the defence of freedoms that some already consider excessive in relation to ordinary law?

Issues relating to trust, professional autonomy and the independence of academics

Freedom of research, freedom of teaching, freedom of expression: the issues surrounding academic freedoms – in the plural – or, if we consider them as a whole, academic freedom – in the singular – concern the conditions under which knowledge is produced, transmitted and utilised.

Far from being a matter confined to academics, the issue of academic freedom concerns the whole of society: it determines the effectiveness of the right to education and the very exercise of citizenship. Like freedom of the press, artistic freedom, trade union freedom or the independence of the judiciary, it is a matter of democratic principle.

However, in light of the above, we can see the extent to which AI poses a threat to democracy and how it undermines the very foundations of the university, risking the erosion of (1) the essential trust in academic processes, whilst casting a heavy shadow over (2) professional autonomy itself and (3) the independence of academics at the very heart of our academic freedom.

A challenge to trust that threatens professional autonomy

Academic freedom has recently been reduced to a professional privilege, the '*privilege of an intellectual elite*' that lectures '*from the height of its chair*'. Yet it is by no means a privilege, nor even simply a right: academic freedom is first and foremost a freedom essential to the fulfilment of our missions and indispensable to the very existence of the University. Freedom is never a privilege. At university, it is indispensable to dialogue and, ultimately, to the interdependence of academics. It constitutes an openness to difference and to a variety of approaches and methods. Academic freedom is not a matter of an individual's claim to a subjective right, but of a collective and reasoned praxis, as reflected in the definition set out in French law by the Education Code.

As Timothy Ingold recently emphasised, academic freedom presupposes trust: the "*loss of trust is the greatest enemy of academic freedom, since it leads to the replacement of autonomy and self-determination with surveillance and control*¹⁴".

If academic freedom is essential to universities and to the generation of knowledge, it is because of the proven risks (censorship, bias, errors, concealment, etc.) that all forms of power outside the scientific sphere objectively pose to research activity. It is imperative that academics be able to

14 Timothy Ingold, 2020, "*On Building a University for the Common Good*", *Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 45–68.

control for themselves both what they produce and the conditions under which they practise their profession.

The repeated attacks, the denigration of knowledge and scholars, and the loss of trust that these entail, may explain the multitude of questions — not to say challenges — facing academic professions today. The repeated attacks on the university, the assertion of a desire to clarify the contours of academic freedom, to define it, to enshrine it in charters, may appear both as evidence of a decline in trust and as a tool enabling, through more or less reductive definitions, its circumscription.

But the moment we attempt to define it precisely, to set its boundaries, we realise just how much academic freedom is instantly curtailed. To illustrate this, there are increasingly frequent attempts to curtail academics' freedom of expression, which in France is exempt from the duty of discretion required of civil servants. And the question arises: freedom of expression outside the university? Inside the university? As if one could exist without the other. And why should academics not have the same freedom of expression as all citizens in a democracy? We know that academic freedom of expression is both stronger and more limited than freedom of expression. It entails absolute freedom of thought, research, discussion, publication and teaching for academic staff. But it can only be defended on condition that it is grounded in knowledge, a scientific approach, facts, experiments, dialogue among peers, *disputatio*, rational demonstrations, intellectual honesty... This is why it is not only permissible but also desirable for academics to challenge conventional wisdom or particular interests: *'And yet it turns!'*, vaccines are useful, certain agricultural practices pose a threat to health and the environment... This is sometimes unpopular... But this freedom of expression is the very foundation of the University.

The defence of academic freedom largely encompasses the defence of professional autonomy. Consequently, AI appears here as a *'Trojan horse'* for tech multinationals to reduce the autonomy of the scientific field and, secondly, that the conditions of the collective control we must exercise over ourselves and our activities are thereby altered.

ChatGPT is not my peer

Peer review of scientific output is more or less time-consuming and difficult to carry out depending on the discipline, due to the scale of the necessary review processes. Once researchers begin to make intensive use of AI in their work, this will place a strain on these review processes. Firstly, by increasing the number of articles to be assessed due to the apparent productivity gains brought about by the use of AI. Secondly, and this is where the crux of the problem lies, by forcing reviewers to identify the operations carried out by AI so as to be able to identify the specific biases resulting from the implicit division of labour between humans and machines (not forgetting, incidentally, that this machine is, at the current stage of this technology's development, a distillation of human labour).

Given the increasing difficulty of this work, it is highly likely that the use of AI will very quickly become an indispensable aid in boosting reviewers' productivity. However, the use of this technology at this stage is not without risks. The simultaneous, large-scale use of AI to generate knowledge and assess its veracity prior to dissemination is certainly not, in itself, an infringement of

academic freedom comparable to traditional infringements, which stem, to a greater or lesser extent, from the abusive exercise of authority external to the scientific field.

This inclusion of AI in oversight activities risks undermining the very concept of academic freedom by altering it epistemologically. Vasiliki Mollaki, of the Greek Committee on Bioethics and Techno-Ethics, emphasising that “*ChatGPT is not a peer*”, has listed the risks associated with automated peer review, including a loss of trust in the process among authors and even the risk of the public losing trust in science¹⁵.

With a massive increase in academic output and, consequently, an evaluation — again using AI — of scientific output, what remains of the essential dialogue between peers? Here, AI poses a direct threat in terms of both a loss of trust between peers, within the academic community, and in the very output of universities, beyond the academic community.

Faced with the black box that is AI, it is essential for the academic community to have a right to algorithmic transparency. This question did not arise in 1997. It is now fundamental: academics must be able to understand how the systems that influence the evaluation or dissemination of their work operate. Academic freedom includes the right to use or refuse AI tools and the protection of the academic community against opaque decisions made by algorithms, particularly in terms of evaluation.

The academic community must also be protected from private actors. The UNESCO recommendation should therefore incorporate technological independence as a safeguard against large corporations (Google, OpenAI, Microsoft, etc.), as well as a right to public, open infrastructure. Research data must not be appropriated or privatised by Big Tech... only to be subsequently resold to universities...

The question of academics’ sovereignty over the data they produce must also be raised: can we allow the unauthorised use of academic output to train AI systems? What obligations exist regarding the protection of students’ and researchers’ personal and professional data? A principle prohibiting the transfer of personal data to AI systems should be established.

The intellectual property issues at stake here are significant, both in research and in teaching, when lectures are recorded or teaching materials are made available online. Academics must retain ownership of their teaching materials (lectures, handouts, image rights) not for commercial reasons (this goes without saying, given that copyright royalties account for virtually nothing in our remuneration) but precisely to enable the very existence of academic debate, with the identification of teams, works and methods...

Furthermore, the principle of academic freedom must be respected, from the production of syllabuses right through to the assessment of student work. The scope for monitoring is totally here and... already in place.

However, training in critical thinking is made far more difficult by the widespread use of AI by students. The risks of inequalities between students and between institutions are already becoming apparent. The software imposed on digital learning platforms (ENT) raises an urgent question in

15 French Office for Scientific Integrity (OFIS), 2025 Symposium, “*Comment l’IA générative transforme les pratiques de recherche : nouveaux enjeux d’intégrité scientifique*”.
<https://www.ofis-france.fr/colloque/colloque-2025/>

itself: could uploading work to an ENT become mandatory? What becomes of the coursework uploaded there?

The independence of academics, combined with the principles of collegiality and professional autonomy, peer review, and the role in France of the National Council of Universities in their qualification, promotion or evaluation, constitute principles closely linked to academic freedom itself. It appears that these principles are not compatible with automated decisions regarding recruitment, promotions or the funding of research. Within institutions, in accordance with the principle of collegiality, the academic community must be guaranteed a say in decisions regarding the adoption of AI tools and data policies... i.e. democratic governance of digital and technological infrastructure.

A threat to academic independence

In universities today, practically under the radar, gagging lawsuits, expulsions from laboratories and attempts at intimidation are on the rise. In recent times, the political authorities themselves have not hesitated to interfere in the FNSP¹⁶'s board of directors (March 2024), in defiance of the principle of university self-governance and the free deliberation of its internal bodies. University autonomy is regularly flouted. A conservative MP, who would go on to become Minister for Higher Education and Research, tabled a motion for a resolution to establish a commission of inquiry '*into ideological infiltration and islamo-leftist excesses in higher education*' (September 2024). With the support of the far right, which (October 2024) will take up the project as its own. Tabled in April 2025, another constitutional bill purporting to guarantee academic freedom is currently making its way through the legislative process, raising concerns about the MPs' motives. In March 2026, yet another bill seeks to circumvent academic autonomy. The desire for political control is now undeniable.

Just as with the independence of judges, the independence of academics from all forms of power — be it religious, economic or political — constitutes a pillar of democracy. In recent times, the question of the institutional autonomy of higher education institutions has been raised, and we must assess the shift taking place here.

The professional autonomy of academics, inherited from the classical and Humboldtian vision, in which academic freedom is a fundamental principle, concerns all lecturers and researchers as professionals. It refers to the ability to define research topics, choose scientific methods, organise their teaching, assess students according to academic criteria, and participate in the self-regulation of the profession amongst peers (recruitment, evaluations, examination boards, peer-reviewed journals, etc.). From this perspective, the university is first and foremost a scholarly community, self-governed by the academics themselves.

Institutional autonomy, inspired by the American model, shifts the focus to the institution itself, examining the university's capacity to make its own decisions regarding budget management, staffing, the opening or closure of courses, international partnerships, internal 'governance', and so on. This approach developed significantly from the 1980s onwards with reforms inspired by New

¹⁶ The FNSP (Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques), a private foundation, manages the IEP de Paris (Sciences Po, Paris), owns its buildings and libraries, and determines its budget

Public Management, under which the state should no longer directly steer every decision, but should instead merely set objectives whilst leaving institutions greater leeway to achieve them.

One might think that greater institutional autonomy means greater autonomy for academics. However, although this may seem paradoxical, as we in France have known since the LRU¹⁷, this is far from the case, and institutional autonomy can even go so far as to reduce professional autonomy.

In a context where AI can largely be used to serve institutional autonomy at the expense of our professional autonomy, we must reaffirm the principle of academic independence, which, combined with dialogue among peers, forms the foundation of academic freedom.

A society in which academic freedom is under attack runs the risk of losing all its freedoms

This independence, far from being a professional privilege, is indispensable to the very fulfilment of the University's missions. This freedom for academics, far from being the privilege denounced by some, is a professional tool.

In a democracy, the production and dissemination of knowledge must be able to challenge certain prejudices, or even certain interests. “*And yet it moves!*” continued to assert (1633) a Galileo persecuted by an obscurantist church. Vaccines are useful, science continues to assert today. Certain agricultural practices do indeed pose a threat to the environment, scientists maintain, even when some farmers' unions go so far as to block the entrance to their laboratories and their own ministry “*forgets*” to support them...

Against a backdrop of rising totalitarianism and the development of authoritarian capitalism, AI systems pose serious threats, as they facilitate control mechanisms over both teaching and research. A society that seeks to curtail the independence necessary for academics to carry out their duties and which also directly attacks academic freedom, runs the risk of losing all its freedoms. If the use of AI is becoming inevitable for society — at least until we have exhausted the energy resources required for its operation... — it is vital that we establish, today, a form of collective epistemological vigilance regarding its applications.

Academic freedom will only be preserved if, and only if, scientific activity remains a human activity with its own limits and characteristics. If, as Gaston Bachelard asserted, ‘*daydreaming is the ally of reason*’, we must be wary of machines that would deprive us of all dreamlike activity. This undoubtedly requires collective regulation of this technology within the scientific field. Returning to the foundations of the university by reaffirming the very principles of its existence allows us to fully appreciate the challenges facing the university today, both in the face of authoritarian threats and the proliferation of AI dominated by ‘tech’ multinationals.

17 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007%E2%80%932009_university_protests_in_France#The_LRU_law